



NEWS

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INCREASED ENFORCEMENT PLUS EDUCATION EQUALS LIVES SAVED

(SACRAMENTO) Fewer people lost their lives on California's roadways in 2006 compared to the previous year, according to preliminary California Highway Patrol statistics. Highway collision fatalities decreased 9.22 percent to 3,907 people when compared to 2005.

"While I am saddened to see these deaths, I am pleased to see what appears to be a substantial reduction in the number of casualties," said CHP Commissioner Mike Brown. "The projected reduction reflects the emphasis the CHP places on safety."

Within CHP jurisdiction alone, the number of traffic fatalities is projected to have dropped 5.56 percent in 2006.

One of the goals of the CHP is the prevention of death, injury, and property damage. The indicator of a state's relative success in traffic safety is represented by the number of traffic fatalities per every 100 million miles of vehicle travel, referred to as the Mileage Death Rate (MDR). The MDR is affected by both increased educational and enforcement efforts.

"Early indications are that California's estimated mileage death rate in 2006 is 1.21, that's a dramatic improvement from the previous year's 1.31 if that holds up," said Commissioner Brown. The MDR won't be official until the third quarter of 2007 when all data elements are finalized.

California Police Chiefs Association President and Chief of the Vacaville Police Department Richard Word praised the hard work of law enforcement agencies throughout the state in helping to reduce tragedies on the roadways. "A lot of credit goes to the men and women of California law enforcement out there doing the job everyday and their dedication to traffic safety," Word said.

A number of the state's law enforcement agencies such as the Fresno Police Department, the San Francisco Police Department, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Moreno Valley Police Department were recognized during last year's California Law Enforcement Challenge for taking education and communication with the public to new heights in various areas of traffic safety.

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“These projected reductions in collisions and victims killed are primarily the result of increased enforcement and education in the three main causes of fatal crashes – seat belt usage, DUIs and speeding,” added Commissioner Brown.

The preliminary figures were also good news at the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). OTS awards grants to agencies throughout the state for programs aimed at reducing deaths and injuries on California's roadways. In the last year OTS awarded \$103 million to 290 agencies, more funding to more agencies than ever before, with greater emphasis on combating DUI offenders, increasing seat belt use, and promoting public awareness campaigns.

"It is immensely gratifying to see such positive results from our work, the work of agencies and organizations across the state, and from the people of California as they strengthen their commitment to traffic safety," said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy.

“Law enforcement continues to do their job enforcing the laws and educating the motoring public, we ask that the public does their part by observing the traffic laws and driving safely and courteously,” said Commissioner Brown.

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